

Second World Summit for Social Development

4- 6 November 2025, Doha, Qatar

**INTERVENTION BY H.E. MR YIANNIS PANAYIOTOU,
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL INSURANCE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

Round Table 1: Strengthening the three pillars of social development:
poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for
all, and social inclusion

4 November 2025

(3 minutes)

Secretary-General,

Heads of State,

Prime Ministers,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Copenhagen Summit of 1995 laid the foundation for a vision of social development built on three mutually reinforcing pillars: poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social inclusion. Thirty years later, this integrated approach remains essential for achieving equality, resilience and shared prosperity.

We know from experience that progress in one area cannot be sustained without the others. Poverty reduction requires decent and secure jobs; decent work must be supported by inclusive societies that provide access to quality services and social protection. When one pillar weakens, inequality grows, social cohesion erodes, and trust in institutions declines.

Undoubtedly, fiscal policy is one of the most powerful tools governments have for supporting social development.

To better advance social development, fiscal policy must rest on three pillars: raising revenue fairly, spending it efficiently, and ensuring long-term sustainability. On the revenue side, this means more progressive tax systems that ask those with greater capacity to contribute more while protecting lower-income households. On the expenditure side, we must prioritise investment in education, healthcare, and social protection, as these generate the highest social returns.

Cyprus, which will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2026, and serves as an elected member of the UN

Human Rights Council for 2025–2027, is deeply committed to advancing integrated labour and social development policies for a better future for all.

Cyprus is implementing several flagship initiatives in the social sphere: the National Strategy for Active Ageing 2025–2030, promoting the full participation of older persons in society and the economy; the National Action Plan for Establishing a European Child Guarantee 2022–2030, aimed at preventing and combating child poverty and social exclusion; and the Revised National Disability Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2028, promoting the rights of persons with disabilities at every stage of life.

In Cyprus, decisive action has also been taken in the labour market through the introduction of a statutory minimum wage, the renewal of collective agreements, and targeted upskilling initiatives. Average wages rose by 13.2%, the highest increase since 1993, while pensions increased by nearly 6%, the largest rise since 1996. In addition, in **2025**, the **employment rate in Cyprus reached 80%**, achieving 5 years earlier the relevant target **which was set to be reached by 2030**.

These achievements are not incidental; they reflect deliberate policy choices and close collaboration with social partners. In Cyprus, tripartite cooperation has long guided us through crises and enabled consensus in times of change. Through dialogue, we build trust, uphold labour rights, and ensure that transitions—whether green, digital, or demographic—are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

Thank you.

(449 words)